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· RIP VAN WINKLE ·

WASHINGTON IRVING

RIP VAN WINKLE

A POSTHUMOUS WRITING

OF

DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER

With an Introduction

BY

MARK VAN DOREN

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

IT IS particularly fitting that the type composition for a new edition of RIP VAN WINKLE should be done in the vicinage of IRVING's story—in the foothills of RIP's own Kaatskill mountains, at Marlborough-on-Hudson, on the premises that are said to have been a part of the land whereon WOLFERT'S ROOST was located; and too, in a type especially designed for the book.

The type itself, to borrow a phrase from the author's prefatory note to DIEDRICH KNICKERBOCKER'S story of RIP VAN WINKLE in the first edition of THE SKETCH BOOK [1819], "is not a whit better than it should be." It has been designed by Mr. FREDERIC W. GOUDY for the composition of this great American classic by the American author who first interpreted the spirit and function of American literature. Since [consciously] the type owes nothing in its design to any existing

face, the type is therefore as truly an American type as anything as hidebound by tradition as type can be.

It was Mr. Goudy's intention to present a letter as simple, legible, vigorous, clear and effective in detail as possible, and which would show no note of strangeness in the mass. How well he has succeeded is for the reader to decide. It has been named "Kaatskill" by the designer of the face, who, with the help of Mrs. Goudy, has engraved the matrices from which it is cast; the setting of the type has been done by Mrs. Goudy at The Village Press, Deepdene, Marlborough, N. Y.

INTRODUCTION

RIP VAN WINKLE is one of the most famous stories ever written. It is surpassed in fame only by that kind of tale which is not written but told; and indeed it has itself become a legend. Hundreds of thousands—perhaps millions—of people know its general outline, or some of its fascinating particulars, without knowing who wrote it or whether anybody wrote it. There is the central picture of a man who goes to sleep and stays asleep for twenty years, and there are the additional images of a drowsy Dutch village by the Hudson, a shrewish wife, a lovable ne'er-do-well whom this dame has henpecked, a crowd of children, a dog, a trip one day to the Catskills,

a host of queer, antiquated fellows who play at nine-pins, a faint roll of thunder, a cask of liquor, a rusty fowling-piece, a beard grown long over night, a return to the village, and an effort to identify that village in its new guise. Some or all of these things are vividly present in every mind, even though the story as WASHINGTON IRVING printed it a little more than a century ago may never have been read at all. And if one has read it, one has not forgotten it. It is that kind of master-piece—perfectly transparent and clear, and shining in our imagination as if it had always been there, as if indeed it were the very stuff of which imagination is made.

It may be difficult even for a sophisticated reader to realize that RIP VAN WINKLE has a date —that there was a time when it did not exist, and RIP neither slept nor waked. It first saw the light, however, in 1819, when IRVING sent it from England, along with some other sketches, to his brother EBENEZER in America in the hope that an audience for it might be found. IRVING had been in England since 1815, when he had gone there

from his native New York in order to assist in the stabilization of a family business which had a branch in Liverpool. The business failed, and Irving was reduced to a period of comparative unhappiness from which he thought to rescue himself by returning to his pen. He was already a celebrated author, both in America and in England. His first book, Salmagundi, or the Whim-Whams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff and Others, a satirical miscellany which in 1807, at the age of twenty, he had issued in collaboration with his brother William and with J. K. Paulding, had given him no more than a local New York reputation. But A History of New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty, by Diedrich Knickerbocker, had made him in 1809 a humorist with an international vogue. Now after ten years of silence, and after a period of various doubts and disappointments, he was to become an author once more.

The sketches he sent to America found, of course, a publisher & were immediately popular.

After they had begun to work their way back across the Atlantic, appearing in The London *Literary Gazette* and attracting the attention of a London bookseller who was rumored to intend collecting them, Irving bestirred himself and submitted them as a collection called "The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent." to the best known of all publishers in London, John Murray. He was discouraged by Murray's failure to find them promising, but in the end had the great good fortune to enlist the interest of his friend Sir Walter Scott, who eventually was responsible for their publication, with remarkable success, by Murray himself. Of Irving's subsequent career—of his long and genial life in America, of his various residences in Spain and other countries of Europe, of his many other books some of which are only a little less known than the Sketch Book, there is no need to speak here.

Much of the Sketch Book is now of only secondary interest. Many of its highly sentimental pages are too clearly marked by their time to move us now, and some of the subjects were of

transient significance even then. Half a dozen pieces, however, have worn well. The Christmas essays, the rural essays, and three of the stories—The Spectre Bridegroom, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, and Rip Van Winkle—are still fresh. And the freshest of these is Rip Van Winkle.

I have indicated that it has a kind of absolute freshness. If this is true, what may be the reasons? Probably they cannot be discovered or stated, yet it seems worth while to make the attempt. And the first thing to be remarked is that Irving was always at his best when he was celebrating a locality. It has been pointed out that the history of his imagination is the history of the successive places which it exploited—and in a manner created. In the beginning there was New York, both the city and the country lying northward along the wide river which Irving loved. In this scene are set the History of New York and such tales as The Legend of Sleepy Hollow and Rip Van Winkle. Then there was rural England, which inspired certain of the chapters in The Sketch Book and the whole of Bracebridge Hall. Later

it was Spain, out of which came the Life of Columbus, The Conquest of Granada and The Alhambra. And finally the American frontier called forth Astoria and The Adventures of Captain Bonneville. Irving plainly recognized that the function of his fancy was to dignify localities by giving them legendary depth, by thickening their atmosphere with association and reminiscence. The European world was ready made to such a purpose. In the Author's Account of Himself prefixed to The Sketch Book Irving paid a tribute to the beauty of America's natural scenery, but went on to say that "Europe held forth the charms of storied and poetical association. There were to be seen the masterpieces of art, the refinements of highly-cultivated society, the quaint peculiarities of ancient and local custom. My native country was full of youthful promise: Europe was rich in the accumulated treasures of age. Her very ruins told the history of times gone by, and every mouldering stone was a chronicle. I longed to wander over the scenes of renowned achievement—to tread, as it

were, in the footsteps of antiquity—to loiter about the ruined castle—to meditate on the falling tower—to escape, in short, from the commonplace realities of the present, and lose myself among the shadowy grandeurs of the past."

Oldness for IRVING was the most charming of all things. He found Europe old and left it so. Finding America young, he did what he could to wreathe it in mists of antiquity. The New York books are the best of all not merely because their material was closest to his life, but even more because they represent a definitely creative effort. And the reward of that effort has been the fame of stories which lay a blue haze of legend over places otherwise quite barren in this regard. The vitality of the name Knickerbocker is a comparatively trivial symbol of IRVING's power; a better symbol is the association in almost everyone's mind between the Catskill mountains and RIP VAN WINKLE's long sleep. How many travellers along the Hudson do not still find themselves thinking, as they glance over at the blue hills, of that immortal day when HENDRIK HUDSON and

his crew came back to earth and made their nine-pin thunder somewhere in a high amphitheater at the head of a ravine?

Other reasons for the eminence of IRVING's story are to be found, if found at all, in the work itself. The theme of a long sleep was not new, of course, when IRVING used it; many legends of many races had given it in one form or another a universal currency. IRVING had the advantage, then, of an old & tried device. He had the advantage also of a singularly limpid narrative style, one well adapted to the carrying of legendary baggage; and, fortunately for this story, the prolixity which beset him on many occasions did not beset him here. He must have known that he enjoyed a further and incalculable advantage in the character of his hero; for ne'er-do-wells are not difficult to make attractive, particularly when they combine with their shiftlessness a disposition to love dogs and children, a capacity for picturesque though useless effort upon occasion, & a handiness at making objects—whistles for boys or fishing-lines for all the town—which

have no economic value. One need not speak of the sympathy which such a man must command when it is made known that he has a termagant wife.

But it is perhaps in the invention and handling of his details that IRVING shows himself most clearly a master. The dog Wolf, the rusty gun, the aching joints, the surprising beard, the soft evening thunder of HENDRIK HUDSON'S game—who has ever forgotten these? They stick in the memory with that ease which comes from seeming never to have been deliberately invented. It is almost as if we had thought of them ourselves; and indeed they are introduced into the story at just those points where our natural curiosity has begun to desire them.

Nowhere are the details more skillfully handled than they are at the end, when the recognition between RIP and the village takes place. I say the end, but it should be remarked that this conclusion is almost exactly half of the story. IRVING'S narrative instinct, always fairly sure, told him here that no theme is more interesting in

fiction than the theme of recognition. Homer brought Odysseus home in the middle of the Odyssey; twelve books are devoted to minute accounts of the hero's identification by swineherd, wife, son, nurse & suitors. The tragic poets of Greece were never weary of writing plays the whole subject of which was the meeting of Orestes and Electra after long separation. So Rip is shown proceeding step by step toward a consciousness that this is the village he had left and yet not that village either. And once again the items are brilliantly chosen—the roofless house with its swinging doors, the tavern sign on which a likeness of George III has been transformed into a likeness of George Washington, the crowd around Rip, the daughter with her child in arms, the son who lounges against a tree and is the very replica of his father in the good days of his idle youth, and finally the oldest inhabitant, who peers into our hero's face and makes the identification complete. Here again are circumstances that one cannot and does not forget. The invention is so good that one does not know it as

invention. One must admit, however, that any discoverable reasons for the appeal of Rip Van Winkle are less important than the fact that it does appeal and has appealed to millions of human beings. Few stories have achieved so many excellences within so small a compass, and yet no story could be simpler or more innocent of claims upon our admiration. It must be admired. But a far greater compliment can be paid the tale. It must be believed.

Mark Van Doren

· RIP VAN WINKLE ·

TO THE READER

THE following Tale was found among the papers of the late *Diedrich Knickerbocker*, an old gentleman of New York, who was very curious in the Dutch history of the province, & the manners of the descendants from its primitive settlers. His historical researches, however, did not lie so much among books, as among men; for the former are lamentably scanty on his favourite topics; whereas he found the old burghers, and still more, their wives, rich in that legendary lore, so invaluable to true history. Whenever, therefore, he happened upon a genuine Dutch family, snugly shut up in its low-roofed farm house, under a spreading sycamore, he looked upon it as a little clasped volume of black-letter, and studied it with the zeal of a book-worm.

The result of all these researches was a history of the province, during the reign of the Dutch governors, which he published some years since. There have been various opinions as to the literary character of his work, and, to tell the truth, it is not a whit better than it should be. Its chief merit is its scrupulous accuracy, which, indeed, was a little questioned,

on its first appearance, but has since been completely established; and it is now admitted into all historical collections, as a book of unquestionable authority.

The old gentleman died shortly after the publication of his work, and now, that he is dead and gone, it cannot do much harm to his memory, to say, that his time might have been much better employed in weightier labours. He, however, was apt to ride his hobby his own way; and though it did now and then kick up the dust a little in the eyes of his neighbours, and grieve the spirit of some friends, for whom he felt the truest deference and affection; yet his errors and follies are remembered "more in sorrow than in anger,"* and it begins to be suspected, that he never intended to injure or offend. But however his memory may be appreciated by critics, it is still held dear among many folk, whose good opinion is well worth having; particularly certain biscuit bakers, who have gone so far as to imprint his likeness on their new year cakes, and have thus given him a chance for immortality, almost equal to being stamped on a Waterloo medal, or a Queen Anne's farthing.

*Vide the excellent discourse of G. C. Verplanck, Esq. before the *New York Historical Society*.

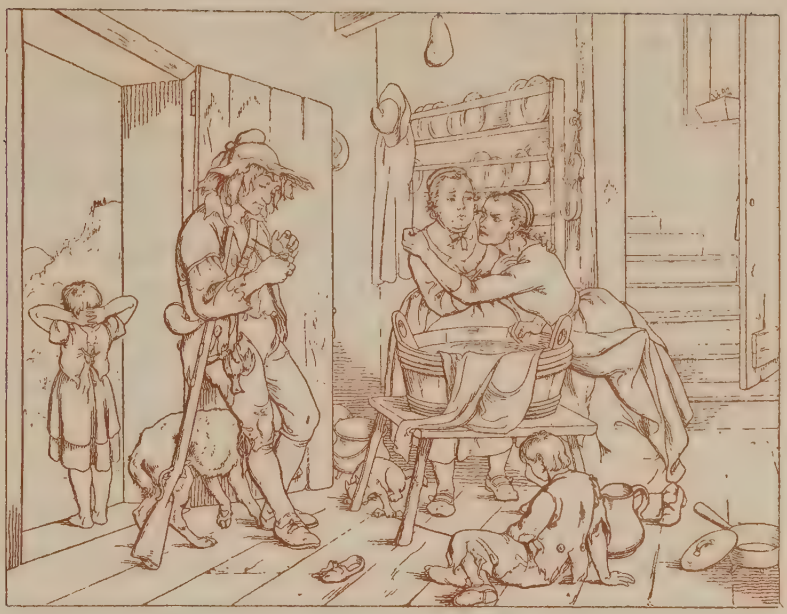
RIP VAN WINKLE

By Woden, God of Saxons,
From whence comes Wensday, that is Wodensday,
Truth is a thing that ever I will keep
Unto thylke day in which I creep into
My sepulchre... CARTWRIGHT

WHOEVER has made a voyage up the Hudson, must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, & lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of weather, indeed, every hour of the day, produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains, and they are regarded by all the

good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple, and print their bold outlines on the clear evening sky; but sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of gray vapours about their summits, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory.

At the foot of these fairy mountains, the voyager may have descried the light smoke curling up from a village, whose shingle roofs gleam among the trees, just where the blue tints of the upland melt away into the fresh green of the nearer landscape. It is a little village of great antiquity, having been founded by some of the Dutch colonists, in the early times of the province, just about the beginning of the government of the good PETER STUYVESANT, [may he rest in peace!] and there were some of the houses of the original settlers standing within a few years, with lattice windows, gable fronts surmounted with weathercocks, and built of small yellow bricks brought from Holland.



In that same village, and in one of these very houses, [which, to tell the precise truth, was sadly time worn and weather beaten,] there lived many years since, while the country was yet a province of Great Britain, a simple good natured fellow, of the name of Rip Van Winkle. He was a descendant of the Van Winkles who figured so gallantly in the chivalrous days of Peter Stuyvesant, and accompanied him to the siege of Fort Christina. He inherited, however, but little of the martial character of his ancestors. I have ob-

served that he was a simple good natured man; he was moreover a kind neighbour, and an obedient, henpecked husband. Indeed, to the latter circumstance might be owing that meekness of spirit which gained him such universal popularity; for those men are most apt to be obsequious and conciliating abroad, who are under the discipline of shrews at home. Their tempers, doubtless, are rendered pliant and malleable in the fiery furnace of domestic tribulation, and a curtain lecture is worth all the sermons in the world for teaching the virtues of patience & long suffering. A termagant wife may, therefore, in some respects, be considered a tolerable blessing; and if so, Rip Van Winkle was thrice blessed.

Certain it is, that he was a great favourite among all the good wives of the village, who, as usual with the amiable sex, took his part in all family squabbles, and never failed, whenever they talked those matters over in their evening gossippings, to lay all the blame on Dame Van Winkle. The children of the village, too, would shout with joy whenever he approached. He

assisted at their sports, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches and Indians. Whenever he went dodging about the village, he was surrounded by a troop of them, hanging on his skirts, clambering on his back, and playing a thousand tricks on him with impunity; and not a dog would bark at him throughout the neighbourhood.

The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labour. It could not be for the want of assiduity or perseverance; for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long & heavy as a Tartar's lance, and fish all day without a murmur, even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble. He would carry a fowling piece on his shoulder, for hours together, trudging through woods and swamps, and up hill and down dale, to shoot a few squirrels or wild pigeons. He would never even refuse to assist a neighbour in the roughest toil, & was a foremost man at all country frolicks for husking Indian corn, or building stone fences.

The women of the village, too, used to employ him to run their errands, and to do such little odd jobs as their less obliging husbands would not do for them;—in a word, Rip was ready to attend to any body's business but his own; but as to doing family duty, and keeping his farm in order, it was impossible.

In fact, he declared it was no use to work on his farm; it was the most pestilent little piece of ground in the whole country; every thing about it went wrong, & would go wrong, in spite of him. His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go astray, or get among the cabbages; weeds were sure to grow quicker in his fields than any where else; the rain always made a point of setting in just as he had some out-door work to do; so that though his patrimonial estate had dwindled away under his management, acre by acre, until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes, yet it was the worst conditioned farm in the neighbourhood.

His children, too, were as ragged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin

begotten in his own likeness, promised to inherit the habits, with the old clothes of his father. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels, equipped in a pair of his father's cast-off galligaskins, which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train in bad weather.

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the world easy, eat white bread or brown, whichever can be got with least thought

or trouble, and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away, in perfect contentment; but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and everything he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence. Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley from his wife, so that he was fain to draw off his forces, and take to the outside of the house—the only side which, in truth, belongs to a henpecked husband.

Rip's sole domestic adherent was his dog Wolf, who was as much henpecked as his master; for Dame Van Winkle regarded them as companions in idleness, and even looked upon Wolf with an evil eye, as the cause of his master's so often going astray. True it is, in all points of spirit

befitting an honourable dog, he was as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods—but what courage can withstand the ever-during and all-besetting terrors of a woman's tongue? The moment Wolf entered the house, his crest fell, his tail drooped to the ground, or curled between his legs, he sneaked about with a gallows air, casting many a sidelong glance at Dame Van Winkle, and at the least flourish of a broomstick or ladle, would fly to the door with yelping precipitation.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle as years of matrimony rolled on; a tart temper never mellows with age, & a sharp tongue is the only edge tool that grows keener by constant use. For a long while he used to console himself, when driven from home, by frequenting a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village, which held its sessions on a bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of his majesty George the Third. Here they used to sit in the shade, of a long lazy summer's day, talking listless-

ly over village gossip, or telling endless sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions which sometimes took place, when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands, from some passing traveller. How solemnly they would listen to the contents, as drawled out by Derrick Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, a dapper learned little man, who was not to be daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary; & how sagely they would deliberate upon public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this junto were completely controlled by Nicholas Vedder a patriarch of the village, and landlord of the inn, at the door of which he took his seat from morning till night, just moving sufficiently to avoid the sun, and keep in the shade of a large tree; so that the neighbours could tell the hour by his movements as accurately as by a sun dial. It is true, he was rarely heard to speak, but smoked his pipe incessantly. His adherents, however, [for every great man

has his adherents,] perfectly understood him, and knew how to gather his opinions. When anything that was read or related displeased him, he was observed to smoke his pipe vehemently, and send forth short, frequent, and angry puffs; but when pleased, he would inhale the smoke slowly and tranquilly, and emit it in light and placid clouds, and sometimes taking the pipe from his mouth, and letting the fragrant vapour curl about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation.

From even this strong hold the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his termagant wife, who would suddenly break in upon the tranquillity of the assemblage, and call the members all to nought; nor was that august personage, Nicholas Vedder himself, sacred from the daring of this terrible virago, who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair; and his only alternative to escape from the labour of the farm and the clamour of his wife, was to take gun in hand, and stroll away into the woods.

Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree, and share the contents of his wallet with Wolf with whom he sympathised as a fellow sufferer in persecution. "Poor Wolf," he would say, "thy mistress leads thee a dog's life of it; but never mind, my lad, while I live thou shalt never want a friend to stand by thee!" Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his master's face, and if dogs can feel pity, I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart.

In a long ramble of the kind on a fine autumnal day, Rip had unconsciously scrambled to one of the highest parts of the Kaatskill mountains. He was after his favourite sport of squirrel shooting, and the still solitudes had echoed and re-echoed with the reports of his gun. Panting and fatigued, he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll, covered with mountain herbage, that crowned the brow of a precipice. From an opening between the trees, he could overlook all the lower country for many a mile of rich woodland. He saw at a distance the lordly Hudson, far, far below him, moving on its silent but majestic

course, the reflection of a purple cloud, or the sail of a lagging bark, here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom, and at last losing itself in the blue highlands.

On the other side he looked down into a deep mountain glen, wild, lonely, and shagged, the bottom filled with fragments from the impending cliffs, & scarcely lighted by the reflected rays of the setting sun. For some time Rip lay musing on this scene; evening was gradually advancing, the mountains began to throw their

long blue shadows over the valleys, he saw that it would be dark long before he could reach the village, and he heaved a heavy sigh when he thought of encountering the terrors of Dame Van Winkle.

As he was about to descend, he heard a voice from a distance, hallooing, "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!" He looked around, but could see nothing but a crow winging its solitary flight across the mountain. He thought his fancy must have deceived him, and turned again to descend, when he heard the same cry ring through the still evening air; "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!"—at the same time Wolf bristled up his back, and giving a low growl, skulked to his master's side, looking fearfully down into the glen. Rip now felt a vague apprehension stealing over him; he looked anxiously in the same direction, & perceived a strange figure slowly toiling up the rocks, and bending under the weight of something he carried on his back. He was surprised to see any human being in this lonely and unfrequented place, but supposing it to be

some one of the neighbourhood in need of his assistance he hastened down to yield it.

On nearer approach, he was still more surprised at the singularity of the stranger's appearance. He was a short square built old fellow, with thick bushy hair, and a grizzled beard. His dress was of the antique Dutch fashion—a cloth jerkin strapped round the waist—several pair of breeches, the outer one of ample volume, decorated with rows of buttons down the sides, and bunches at the knees. He bore on his shoulders a stout keg, that seemed full of liquor, and made signs for Rip to approach and assist him with the load. Though rather shy and distrustful of this new acquaintance, Rip complied with his usual alacrity, and mutually relieving each other, they clambered up a narrow gully, apparently the dry bed of a mountain torrent. As they ascended, Rip every now and then heard loud rolling peals, like distant thunder, which seemed to issue out of a deep ravine, or rather cleft between lofty rocks, toward which their rugged path conducted. He paused for an instant, but supposing it to be the

muttering of one of those transient thunder showers which often take place in mountain heights, he proceeded. Passing through the ravine, they came to a hollow, like a small amphitheatre, surrounded by perpendicular precipices, over the brinks of which impending trees shot their branches, so that you only caught glimpses of the azure sky, and the bright evening cloud. During the whole time, Rip and his companion had laboured on in silence; for though the former marvelled greatly what could be the object of carrying a keg of liquor up this wild mountain, yet there was something strange and incomprehensible about the unknown, that inspired awe, and checked familiarity.

On entering the amphitheatre, new objects of wonder presented themselves. On a level spot in the centre was a company of odd-looking personages playing at nine-pins. They were dressed in a quaint, outlandish fashion: some wore short doublets, others jerkins, with long knives in their belts, and most had enormous breeches, of similar style with that of the guide's. Their visages, too,

were peculiar: one had a large head, broad face, and small piggish eyes; the face of another seemed to consist entirely of nose, and was surmounted by a white sugar-loaf hat, set off with a little red cockstail. They all had beards, of various shapes and colours. There was one who seemed to be the commander. He was a stout old gentleman, with a weather-beaten countenance; he wore a laced doublet, broad belt & hanger, high crowned hat and feather, red stockings, and high heeled shoes, with roses in them. The whole group reminded

Rip of the figures in an old Flemish painting, in the parlour of Dominie Van Schaick, the village parson, and which had been brought over from Holland at the time of the settlement.

What seemed particularly odd to Rip, was, that though these folks were evidently amusing themselves, yet they maintained the gravest faces, the most mysterious silence, and were, withal, the most melancholy party of pleasure he had ever witnessed. Nothing interrupted the stillness of the scene, but the noise of the balls, which, whenever they were rolled, echoed along the mountains like rumbling peals of thunder.

As Rip and his companion approached them, they suddenly desisted from their play, & stared at him with such fixed statue-like gaze, and such strange, uncouth, lack lustre countenances, that his heart turned within him, and his knees smote together. His companion now emptied the contents of the keg into large flagons, and made signs to him to wait upon the company. He obeyed with fear & trembling; they quaffed the liquor in profound silence, & then returned to their game.

By degrees, Rip's awe and apprehension subsided. He even ventured, when no eye was fixed upon him, to taste the beverage, which he found had much of the flavour of excellent Hollands. He was naturally a thirsty soul, and was soon tempted to repeat the draught. One taste provoked another, and he reiterated his visits to the flagon so often, that at length his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep.

On awaking, he found himself on the green knoll from whence he had first seen the old man of the glen. He rubbed his eyes—it was a bright sunny morning. The birds were hopping and twittering among the bushes, and the eagle was wheeling aloft, and breasting the pure mountain breeze. "Surely," thought Rip, "I have not slept here all night." He recalled the occurrences before he fell asleep. The strange man with the keg of liquor—the mountain ravine—the wild retreat among the rocks—the wo-begone party at nine-pins—the flagon—"Oh! that flagon! that

wicked flagon!" thought Rip—"what excuse shall I make to Dame Van Winkle?"

He looked round for his gun, but in place of the clean well-oiled fowling-piece, he found an old firelock lying by him, the barrel encrusted with rust, the lock falling off, and the stock worm-eaten. He now suspected that the grave roysters of the mountain had put a trick upon him, and having dosed him with liquor, had robbed him of his gun. Wolf, too, had disappeared, but he might have strayed away after a squirrel or partridge. He whistled after him, shouted his name, but all in vain; the echoes repeated his whistle and shout, but no dog was to be seen.

He determined to revisit the scene of the last evening's gambol, and if he met with any of the party, to demand his dog and gun. As he arose to walk, he found himself stiff in the joints, and wanting in his usual activity. "These mountain beds do not agree with me," thought Rip, "and if this frolick should lay me up with a fit of the rheumatism, I shall have a blessed time with Dame Van Winkle." With some difficulty he

got down into the glen; he found the gully up which he and his companion had ascended the preceding evening; but to his astonishment a mountain stream was now foaming down it, leaping from rock to rock, and filling the glen with babbling murmurs. He, however, made shift to scramble up its sides, working his toilsome way through thickets of birch, sassafras, and witch hazle, and sometimes tripped up or entangled by the wild grape vines that twisted their coils and tendrils from tree to tree, and spread a kind of network in his path.

At length he reached to where the ravine had opened through the cliffs, to the amphitheatre; but no traces of such opening remained. The rocks presented a high impenetrable wall, over which the torrent came tumbling in a sheet of feathery foam, and fell into a broad deep basin, black from the shadows of the surrounding forest. Here, then, poor Rip was brought to a stand. He again called and whistled after his dog; he was only answered by the cawing of a flock of idle crows, sporting high in air about a dry tree

that overhung a sunny precipice; and who, secure in their elevation, seemed to look down and scoff at the poor man's perplexities. What was to be done? the morning was passing away, and Rip felt famished for want of his breakfast. He grieved to give up his dog and gun; he dreaded to meet his wife; but it would not do to starve among the mountains. He shook his head, shouldered the rusty firelock, and, with a heart full of trouble and anxiety, turned his steps homeward.

As he approached the village, he met a number of people, but none whom he knew, which somewhat surprised him, for he had thought himself acquainted with every one in the country round. Their dress, too, was of a different fashion from that to which he was accustomed. They all stared at him with equal marks of surprise, and whenever they cast eyes upon him, invariably stroked their chins. The constant recurrence of this gesture induced Rip, involuntarily, to do the same, when, to his astonishment, he found his beard had grown a foot long!

He had now entered the skirts of the village.

A troop of strange children ran at his heels, hooting after him, and pointing at his gray beard. The dogs, too, none of which he recognized for his old acquaintances, barked at him as he passed. The very village seemed altered: it was larger and more populous. There were rows of houses which he had never seen before, and those which had been his familiar haunts had disappeared. Strange names were over the doors—strange faces at the windows—every thing was strange. His mind now began to misgive him; he doubt-

ed whether both he and the world around him were not bewitched. Surely this was his native village, which he had left but the day before. There stood the Kaatskill mountains—there ran the silver Hudson at a distance—there was every hill and dale precisely as it had always been—Rip was sorely perplexed—"That flagon last night," thought he, "has addled my poor head sadly!"

It was with some difficulty he found the way to his own house, which he approached with silent awe, expecting every moment to hear the shrill voice of Dame Van Winkle. He found the house gone to decay—the roof fallen in, the windows shattered, and the doors off the hinges. A half starved dog, that looked like Wolf, was skulking about it. Rip called him by name, but the cur snarled, showed his teeth, and passed on. This was an unkind cut indeed—"My very dog," sighed poor Rip, "has forgotten me!"

He entered the house, which, to tell the truth, Dame Van Winkle had always kept in neat order. It was empty, forlorn, and apparently aban-

doned. This desolateness overcame all his connubial fears—he called loudly for his wife and children—the lonely chambers rung for a moment with his voice, & then all again was silence.

He now hurried forth, and hastened to his old resort, the little village inn—but it too was gone. A large ricketty wooden building stood in its place, with great gaping windows, some of them broken, & mended with old hats and petticoats, and over the door was painted, "The Union Hotel, by JONATHAN DOOLITTLE." Instead of the great tree which used to shelter the quiet little Dutch inn of yore, there now was reared a tall naked pole, with something on top that looked like a red night cap, and from it was fluttering a flag, on which was a singular assemblage of stars and stripes—all this was strange and incomprehensible. He recognised on the sign, however, the ruby face of King GEORGE, under which he had smoked so many a peaceful pipe, but even this was singularly metamorphosed. The red coat was changed for one of blue and buff, a sword was stuck in the hand instead of a sceptre, the head

was decorated with a cocked hat, and underneath was painted in large characters, GENERAL WASHINGTON.

There was, as usual, a crowd of folk about the door, but none whom RIP recollected. The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling, disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquillity. He looked in vain for the sage NICHOLAS VEDDER, with his broad face, double chin, and fair long pipe, uttering clouds of tobacco smoke instead of idle speeches; or VAN BUMMEL, the schoolmaster, doling forth the contents of an ancient newspaper. In place of these, a lean bilious looking fellow, with his pockets full of handbills, was haranguing vehemently about rights of citizens—election—members of congress—liberty—Bunker's hill—heroes of seventy-six—and other words, that were a perfect Babylonish jargon to the bewildered VANWINKLE.

The appearance of RIP, with his long grizzled beard, his rusty fowling piece, his uncouth dress, and the army of women and children that had

gathered at his heels, soon attracted the attention of the tavern politicians. They crowded around him, eyeing him from head to foot, with great curiosity. The orator bustled up to him, and drawing him partly aside, inquired "on which side he voted?" Rip stared in vacant stupidity. Another short but busy little fellow pulled him by the arm, and raising on tiptoe, inquired in his ear, "whether he was Federal or Democrat." Rip was equally at a loss to comprehend the question; when a knowing, self-important old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat, made his way through the crowd, putting them to the right and left with his elbows as he passed, and planting himself before Van Winkle, with one arm akimbo, the other resting on his cane, his keen eyes & sharp hat penetrating, as it were, into his very soul, demanded, in an austere tone, "what brought him to the election with a gun on his shoulder, and a mob at his heels, & whether he meant to breed a riot in the village?" "Alas! gentlemen," cried Rip, somewhat dismayed, "I am a poor quiet man, a native of the place, & a loyal subject of the King, God bless him!"

Here a general shout burst from the bystanders —"A tory! a tory! a spy! a refugee! hustle him! away with him!" It was with great difficulty that the self-important man in the cocked hat restored order; and having assumed a tenfold austerity of brow, demanded again of the unknown culprit, what he came there for, and whom he was seeking. The poor man humbly assured him that he meant no harm; but merely came there in search of some of his neighbours, who used to keep about the tavern.

"Well—who are they?—name them."

Rip bethought himself a moment, & inquired, "where's Nicholas Vedder?"

There was a silence for a little while, when an old man replied, in a thin piping voice, "Nicholas Vedder? why he is dead and gone these eighteen years! There was a wooden tombstone in the church yard that used to tell all about him, but that's rotted and gone too."

"Where's Brom Dutcher?"

"Oh, he went off to the army in the beginning of the war; some say he was killed at the battle of

Stoney-Point—others say he was drowned in a squall, at the foot of Antony's Nose. I don't know —he never came back again."

"Where's Van Bummel, the schoolmaster?"

"He went off to the wars too, was a great militia general, and is now in Congress."

Rip's heart died away, at hearing of these sad changes in his home and friends, and finding himself thus alone in the world. Every answer puzzled him, too, by treating of such enormous lapses of time, and of matters which he could not understand: war—Congress—Stoney Point!—he had no courage to ask after any more friends, but cried out in despair, "does nobody here know Rip Van Winkle?"

"Oh, Rip Van Winkle!" exclaimed two or three, "Oh, to be sure! that's Rip Van Winkle yonder, leaning against the tree."

Rip looked, and beheld a precise counterpart of himself, as he went up the mountain: apparently as lazy, and certainly as ragged. The poor fellow was now completely confounded. He doubted his own identity, and whether he was

himself or another man. In the midst of his bewilderment, the man in the cocked hat demanded who he was, and what was his name?

"God knows," exclaimed he, at his wit's end; "I'm not myself—I'm somebody else—that's me yonder—no—that's somebody else, got into my shoes—I was myself last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain, and they've changed my gun, and every thing's changed, and I'm changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am!"

The bystanders began now to look at each other, nod, wink significantly, and tap their fingers against their foreheads. There was a whisper, also, about securing the gun, & keeping the old fellow from doing mischief; at the very suggestion of which, the self-important man in the cocked hat retired with some precipitation. At this critical moment a fresh likely woman pressed through the throng to get a peep at the graybearded man. She had a chubby child in her arms, which, frightened at his looks, began to cry. "Hush, Rip," cried she, "hush, you little fool, the old man wont hurt you." The name of the child, the air of the mother,

the tone of her voice, all awakened a train of recollections in his mind. "What is your name, my good woman?" asked he.

"Judith Gardenier."

"And your father's name?"

"Ah, poor man, his name was Rip Van Winkle; it's twenty years since he went away from home with his gun, & never has been heard of since—his dog came home without him; but whether he shot himself, or was carried away by the Indians, nobody can tell. I was then but a little girl."

Rip had but one question more to ask; but he put it with a faltering voice:

"Where's your mother?"

Oh, she too had died but a short time since; she broke a blood vessel in a fit of passion at a New-England peddler.

There was a drop of comfort, at least, in this intelligence. The honest man could contain himself no longer.—He caught his daughter and her child in his arms.—"I am your father!" cried he—"Young Rip Van Winkle once—old Rip Van Winkle now!—Does nobody know poor Rip Van Winkle!"

All stood amazed, until an old woman, tottering out from among the crowd, put her hand to her brow, and peering under it in his face for a moment, exclaimed, "Sure enough! it is Rip Van Winkle—it is himself. Welcome home again, old neighbour—Why, where have you been these twenty long years?"

Rip's story was soon told, for the whole twenty years had been to him but as one night. The neighbours stared when they heard it; some were

seen to wink at each other, and put their tongues in their cheeks; and the self-important man in the cocked hat, who, when the alarm was over, had returned to the field, screwed down the corners of his mouth, and shook his head—upon which there was a general shaking of the head throughout the assemblage.

It was determined, however, to take the opinion of old PETER VANDERDONK, who was seen slowly advancing up the road. He was a descendant of the historian of that name, who wrote one of the earliest accounts of the province. PETER was the most ancient inhabitant of the village, and well versed in all the wonderful events and traditions of the neighbourhood. He recollected RIP at once, and corroborated his story in the most satisfactory manner. He assured the company that it was a fact, handed down from his ancestor the historian, that the Kaatskill mountains had always been haunted by strange beings. That it was affirmed that the great HENDRICK HUDSON, the first discoverer of the river & country, kept a kind of vigil there every twenty years,

with his crew of the Half-moon, being permitted in this way to revisit the scenes of his enterprize, and keep a guardian eye upon the river, and the great city called by his name. That his father had once seen them in their old Dutch dresses playing at nine pins in a hollow of the mountain; and that he himself had heard, one summer afternoon, the sound of their balls, like long peals of thunder.

To make a long story short, the company broke up, and returned to the more important concerns of the election. Rip's daughter took him home to live with her; she had a snug, well-furnished house, and a stout cheery farmer for a husband, whom Rip recollected for one of the urchins that used to climb upon his back. As to Rip's son and heir, who was the ditto of himself, seen leaning against the tree, he was employed to work on the farm; but evinced an hereditary disposition to attend to anything else but his business.

Rip now resumed his old walks and habits; he soon found many of his former cronies, though all rather the worse for the wear and tear of time; and preferred making friends among the rising

generation, with whom he soon grew into great favour.

Having nothing to do at home, and being arrived at that happy age when a man can do nothing with impunity, he took his place once more on the bench, at the inn door, & was reverenced as one of the patriarchs of the village, and a chronicle of the old times "before the war." It was some time before he could get into the regular track of gossip, or could be made to comprehend the strange events that had taken place during his torpor; how that there had been a revolutionary war—that the country had thrown off the yoke of old England—and that, instead of being a subject of his Majesty GEORGE the Third, he was now a free citizen of the United States. RIP, in fact, was no politician; the changes of states and empires made but little impression on him; but there was one species of despotism under which he had long groaned, & that was—petticoat government: happily, that was at an end; he had got his neck out of the yoke of matrimony, and could go in & out whenever he pleased, without dreading

the tyranny of Dame Van Winkle. Whenever her name was mentioned, however, he shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and cast up his eyes; which might pass either for an expression of resignation to his fate, or joy at his deliverance.

He used to tell his story to every stranger that arrived at Mr. Doolittle's hotel. He was observed, at first, to vary on some points every time he told it, which was, doubtless, owing to his having so recently awakened. It at last settled down precisely to the tale I have related, and not a man, woman, or child in the neighbourhood, but knew it by heart. Some always pretended to doubt the reality of it, & insisted that Rip had been out of his head, and that this was one point on which he always remained flighty. The old Dutch inhabitants, however, almost universally gave it full credit. Even to this day they never hear a thunder storm of a summer afternoon, about the Kaatskill, but they say Hendrick Hudson and his crew are at their game of nine pins; and it is a common wish of all henpecked husbands in the neighbourhood, when life hangs heavy

on their hands, that they might have a quieting draught out of Rip Van Winkle's flagon.

NOTE

THE foregoing tale, one would suspect, had been suggested to Mr. *Knickerbocker* by a little German superstition about the Emperor Frederick and the Kypphauser mountain; the subjoined note, however, which he had appended to the tale, shows that it is an absolute fact, narrated with his usual fidelity.

"The story of Rip Van Winkle may seem incredible to many, but nevertheless I give it my full belief, for I know the vicinity of our old Dutch settlements to have been very subject to marvellous events and appearances. Indeed, I have heard many stranger stories than this, in the villages along the Hudson; all of which were too well authenticated to admit of a doubt. I have even talked with Rip Van Winkle myself, who, when last I saw him, was a very venerable old man, and so perfectly rational and consistent on every other point, that I think no conscientious person could refuse to take this into the bargain; nay, I have seen a certificate on the subject taken before a country justice and signed with a cross, in the justice's own hand writing. The story, therefore, is beyond the possibility of doubt.

D. K."

This ends the text of the first edition of RIP VAN WINKLE as it was originally printed in The Sketch Book, which has here been faithfully followed. This edition of RIP VAN WINKLE consists of fifteen hundred copies made for the members of *The Limited Editions Club*, with illustrations reproduced from engravings by Felix Darley; printed in Kaatskill type designed & cut for the book by Frederic W. Goudy; set by Bertha M. Goudy at The Village Press, Marlborough-on-Hudson, New York, and printed at the Walpole Printing Office, New Rochelle, New York.

This copy is No. [illegible] and is signed by

F W Goudy

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